OUR SERIAL.

Under the Red Robe

By STANLEY J. WEYMAN

CHAPTER I.

AT ZATON'S.

"Marked cards!"

There were a score round us when the fool, little knowing the man with whom he had to deal, and as little how to lose like a gentleman, flung the words in my teeth. He thought, I'll be sworn, that I should storm and swear and ruffle it like any common cock of the hackle. But that was never Gil de Berault's way. For a few seconds after he had spoken I did not even look at him. I passed my eye instead—smiling, bien entendu—round the ring of waiting faces, saw that there was no one except De Pombal I had cause to fear; and then at last I rose and looked at the fool with the grim face I have known impose on older and wiser men.

"Marked cards, M. l'Anglais?" I said, with a chilling sneer. "They are used, I am told, to trap players—not unbirched schoolboys."

"Yet I say that they are marked!" he replied hotly, in his queer foreign jargon. "In my last hand I had nothing. You doubted the stakes. Bah, Sir, you knew! You have swindled me!"

"Monsieur is easy to swindle—when he plays with a mirror behind him," I answered tartly. And at that there was a great roar of laughter, which might have been heard in the street, and which brought to the table every one in the eating-house whom his violence had not already attracted. But I did not relax my face. I waited until all was quiet again, and then waiving aside two or three who stood between us and the entrance, I pointed gravely to the door. "There is a little space behind the church of St. Jacques, M. l'Etranger," I said, putting on my hat and taking my cloak on my arm. "Doubtless you will accompany me thither?"

He snatched up his hat, his face burning with shame and rage. "With pleasure!" he blurted out. "To the devil, if you like!"

I thought the matter arranged, when the marquis laid his hand on the young fellow's arm and checked him. "This must not be," he said, turning from him to me with his grand fine gentleman's air. "You know me, M. de Berault. This matter has gone far enough."

"Too far, M. de Pombal!" I answered bitterly. "Still, if you wish to take the gentleman's place, I shall raise no objection."

"Chut, man!" he retorted, shrugging his shoulders negligently. "I know you, and I do not fight with men of your stamp. Nor need this gentleman."

"Undoubtedly," I replied, bowing low, "if he prefers to be caned in the streets."

That stung the marquis. "Have a care! have a care!" he cried hotly. "You go too far, M. Berault."

"De Berault, if you please," I objected, eyeing him sternly. "My family has born the de as long as yours, M. de Pombal."

He could not deny that and he answered, "As you please," at the same time restraining his friend by a gesture. "But none the less, take my advice," he continued. "The cardinal has forbidden dueling, and this time he means it! You have been in trouble once and gone free. A second time it may fare worse with you. Let this gentleman go, therefore, M. de Berault. Besides—why, shame upon you, man!" he exclaimed hotly; "he is but a lad!"

Two or three who stood behind me applauded that. But I turned and they met my eye; and they were as mum as mice. "His age is his own concern," I said grimly. "He was old enough a while ago to insult me."

"And I will prove my words!" the lad cried, exploding at last. He had spirit enough, and the marquis had had hard work to restrain him so long. "You do me no service, M. de Pombal," he continued, pettishly shaking off his friend's hand. "By your leave, this gentleman and I will settle this matter."

"That is better," I said, nodding dryly, while the marquis stood aside, frowning and baffled. "Permit me to lead the way."

Zaton's eating-house stands scarcely a hundred paces from St. Jacques la Boucherie, and half the company went thither with us. The evening was wet, the light in the streets was waning, the streets themselves were dirty and slippery. There were few passers in the Rue St. Antoine; and our party, which earlier in the day must have attracted notice and a crowd, crossed unmarked and entered without interruption the paved triangle which lies immediately behind the church. I saw in the distance one of the cardinal's guard loitering in front of the scaffolding round the new Hotel Richelieu; and the sight of the uniform gave us pause for a moment. But it was too late to repent.

The Englishman began at once to strip off his clothes. I closed mine to the throat, for the air was chilly. At that moment, while we stood preparing and most of the company seemed a little inclined to stand off from me, I felt a hand on my arm, and, turning, saw the dwarfish tailor at whose house in the Rue Savonnerie I lodged at the time. The fellow's presence was unwelcome, to say the least of it; and though for want of better company I had sometimes encouraged him to be free with me at home, I took that to be no reason why I should be plagued with him before gentlemen. I shook him off, therefore, hoping by a frown to silence him.

He was not to be easily put down, however. And perforce I had to speak to him. "Afterwards, afterwards," I said. "I am engaged now."

"For God's sake don't Sir!" was the poor fool's answer. "Don't do it! You will bring a curse on the house. He is but a lad, and—"

"You, too!" I exclaimed, losing patience. "Be silent, you scum! What do you know about gentlemen's quarrels? Leave me; do you hear?"

"But the cardinal!" he cried in a quavering voice. "The cardinal, M. de Berault? The last man you killed is not forgotten yet. This time he will be sure to—"

"Do you hear?" I hissed. The fellow's impudence passed all bounds. It was as bad as his croaking. "Begone!" I said. "I suppose you are afraid he will kill me, and you will lose your money?"

Frison fell back at that almost as if I had struck him, and I turned to my adversary who had been awaiting my motions with impatience. God knows he did look young; as he stood with his head bare and his fair hair drooping over his smooth woman's forehead—a mere lad fresh from the College of Burgundy, if they have such a thing in England. I felt a sudden chill as I looked at him: a qualm, a tremor, a presentiment. What was it the little tailor had said? That I should—but there, he did not know. What did he know of such things? If I let this pass I must kill a man a day or leave Paris and the eating-house, and starve.

"A thousand pardons," I said gravely, as I drew and took my place. "A dun. I am sorry that the poor devil caught me so inopportunely. Now, however, I am at your service."

He saluted, and we crossed swords and began. But from the first I had no doubt of what the result would be. The slippery stones and fading light gave him, it is true, some chance, some advantage, more than he deserved; but I had no sooner felt his sword than I knew that he was no swordsman. Possibly he had taken half-a-

"SHAME!"

dozen lessons in rapier art, and practiced what he learned with an Englishman as heavy and awkward as himself. But that was all. He made a few wild, clumsy rushes, parrying wildly. When I had foiled these, the danger was over, and I held him at my mercy.

I played with him a little while, watching the sweat gather on his brow, and the shadow of the church-tower fall deeper and darker, like the shadow of doom on his face. Not out of cruelty—God knows I have never erred in that direction!—but because, for the first time in my life, I felt a strange reluctance to strike the blow. The curls clung to his forehead; his breath came and went in gasps; I heard the men behind me murmur, and one or two of them drop an oath; and then I slipped—slipped, and was down in a moment on my right side, my elbow striking the pavement so sharply that the arm grew numb to the wrist.

He held off! I heard a dozen voices cry, "Now! now you have him!" But he held off. He stood back and waited with his breast heaving and his point lowered, until I had risen and stood again on my guard.

"Enough! enough!" a rough voice behind me cried. "Don't hurt the man after that."

"On guard, Sir!" I answered coolly—for he seemed to waver. "It was an accident. It shall not avail you again."

Several voices cried "Shame!" and one, "You coward!" But the Englishman stepped forward, a fixed look in his blue eyes. He took his place without a word. I read in his drawn white face that he had made up his mind to the worst, and his courage won my admiration. I would gladly and thankfully have set one of the lookers-on—any of the lookers-on—in his place; but that could not be. So I thought of Zaton's closed to me, of Pombal's insult, of the sneers and slights I had long kept at the sword's point; and, pressing him suddenly in a heat of affected anger, I thrust strongly over his guard, which had grown feeble, and ran him through the chest.

When I saw him lying, laid out on the stones with his eyes half shut, and his face glimmering white in the dusk—not that I saw him thus long, for there were a dozen kneeling around rim in a twinkling—I felt an unwonted pang. It passed, however, in a moment. For I found myself confronted by a ring of angry faces—of men who, keeping at a distance, hissed and threatened me.

They were mostly canaille, who had gathered during the fight, and had viewed all that passed from the farther side of the railings. While some snarled and raged at me like wolves, calling me "Butcher!" and "Cut-throat!" and the like, or cried out that Berault was at his trade again, others threatened me with the vengeance of the cardinal, flung the edict in my teeth, and said with glee that the guard was coming—they would see me hanged yet.

"His blood is on your head!" one cried furiously. "He will be dead in an hour. And you will swing for him! Hurrah!"

"Begone to your kennel!" I answered, with a look which sent him a yard backwards, though the railings were between us. And I wiped my blade carefully, standing a little apart. For—well, I could understand it—it was one of those moments when a man is not popular.

But I was not to be outdone in sang-froid. I cocked my hat, and drawing my cloak over my shoulders, went out with a swagger which drove the curs from the gate before I came within a dozen paces of it. The rascals outside fell back as quickly, and in a moment I was in the street. Another moment and I should have been clear of the place and free to lie by for a while, when a sudden scurry took place round me. The crowd fled way into the gloom, and in a hand-turn a dozen of the cardinal's guard closed round me.

I had some acquaintance with the officer in command and he saluted me civilly. "This is a bad business, M. de Berault," he said. "The man is dead they tell me."

"Neither dying nor dead," I answered lightly. "If that be all, you may go home again."

"With you," he replied with a grin, "certainly. And as it rains, the sooner the better. I must ask you for your sword, I am afraid."

"Take it," I said, with the philosophy which never deserts me. "But the man will not die."

"I hope that may avail you," he answered in a tone I did not like. "Left wheel, my friends! To the Chatelet! March!"

"There are worse places," I said, and resigned myself to fate. After all, I had been in prison before, and learned that only one jail lets no prisoner escape.

But when I found that my friend's orders were to hand me over to the watch, and that I was to be confined like any common jail-bird caught cutting a purse or slitting a throat, I confess my heart sank. If I could get speech with the cardinal, all would be well; but if I failed in this, or if the case came before him in strange guise, or he were in a hard mood himself, then it might go ill with me. The edict said, death!

And the lieutenant at the Chatelet did not put himself to much trouble to hearten me. "What! again, M. de Berault?" he said, raising his eyebrows as he received me at the gate, and recognized me by the light of the brazier which his men were just kindling outside. "You are a very bold man, Sir, or a very foolhardy one, to come here again. The old business, I suppose?"

"Yes, but he is not dead," I answered coolly. "He has a trifle—a mere scratch. It was behind the church of St. Jacques."

"He looked dead enough," my friend the guardsman interposed. He had not yet gone.

"Bah!" I answered scornfully. "Have you ever known me to make a mistake? When I kill a man, I kill him. I put myself to pains, I tell you, not to kill this Englishman. Therefore he will live."

"I hope so," said the lieutenant, with a dry smile. "And you had better hope so, too, M. de Berault. For if not—"

"Well?" I said, somewhat troubled. "If not, what, my friend?"

"I fear he will be the last man you will fight," he answered. "And even if he lives, I would not be too sure, my friend. This time the cardinal is determined to put it down."

"He and I are old friends," I said confidently.

"So I have heard," he answered, with a short laugh. "I think the same was said of Chalais. I do not remember that it saved his head."

This was not reassuring. But worse was to come. Early in the morning orders were received that I should be treated with especial strictness, and I was given the choice between irons and one of the cells below level. Choosing the latter, I was left to reflect upon many things; among others, on the queer and uncertain nature of the cardinal, who loved, I knew, to play with a man as a cat with a mouse; and on the ill effects which sometimes attend a high chest-thrust, however carefully delivered. I only rescued myself at last from these and other unpleasant reflections by obtaining the loan of a pair of dice; and the light being just enough to enable me to reckon the throws, I amused myself for hours by casting them on certain principles of my own. But a long run again and again upset my calculations; and at last brought me to the conclusion that a run of bad luck may be so persistent as to see out the most sagacious player. This was not a reflection very welcome to me at the moment.

Nevertheless, for three days it was all the company I had. At the end of that time the knave of a jailer who attended me, and who had never grown tired of telling me, after the fashion of his kind, that I should be hanged, came to me with a less assured air. "Perhaps you would like a little water?" he said civilly.

"Why, rascal?" I asked.

"To wash with," he answered.

"I asked for some yesterday, and you would not bring it," I grumbled. "However, better late than never. Bring it now. If I must hang, I will hang like a gentleman. But, depend upon it, the cardinal will not serve an old friend so scurvy a trick."

"You are to go to him," he answered, when he came back with the water.

"What? To the cardinal?" I cried.

"Yes," he answered.

"Good!" I exclaimed; and in my joy I sprang up at once, and began to refresh my dress. "So all this time I have been doing him an injustice. Vive Monseigneur! I might have known it."

"Don't make too sure!" the man answered spitefully. Then he went on: "I have something else for you. A friend of yours left it at the gate," he added. And he handed me a packet.

"Quite so!" I said, reading his rascally face aright. "And you kept it as long as you dared—as long as you thought I should hang, you knave! Was not that so? But there, do not lie to me. Tell me instead which of my friends left it." For, to confess the truth, I had not so many friends at this time; and ten good crowns—the packet contained no less a sum—argued a pretty staunch friend, and one of whom a man might be proud.

The knave sniggered maliciously. "A crooked, dwarfish man left it," he said. "I doubt I might call him a tailor and not be far out."

"Chut!" I answered; but I was a little out of countenance. "I understand. An honest fellow enough, and in debt to me! I am glad he remembered. But when am I to go, friend?"

"In an hour," he answered sullenly. Doubtless he had looked to get one of the crowns; but I was too old a hand for that. If I came back I could buy his services; and if I did not I should have wasted my money.

(To Be Continued.)

ENDING OF AN OLD FEUD.

Long-Hoped For Scrimmage Was Never Brought to a Proper Conclusion.

One evening when the mail arrived at Barbersville by stage there was the usual move on the part of the crowd of idlers to enter the postoffice. It so happened, relates the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, that Jones, the village cooper, jostled White, the village cobbler, and they turned upon each other with:

"What ye pushin' fur, Tom Jones?"

"Who's a-pushin', Bill White?"

"You are."

"No, I hain't."

"Then I'm a liar!"

"Then you be!"

"Then I can lick two such pumpkin-heads as you!"

"Then I dare you to lay a hand on me!"

There was hope that they would fight, but nothing of the kind took place. Next evening they had the scrape over again, and so on the next, and by and by it came to a regular thing. Every week day evening for long years they had a war of words, and there was little variation. Then the people of the town became discouraged, and one evening as the two men were going through the usual programme they were suddenly pushed together. White accidentally stuck a finger in Jones' eye, and Jones kicked at a dog and landed on White's shin. It was a golden opportunity for the long deferred battle to go on, and for a few seconds the crowd held its breath. Then the two men turned and fled from each other, one going up the street and the other down, and when they met, three days later, Jones held out his hand and said:

"Bill, I hain't mad at you and never was."

"Tom," replied Bill, as he reached for the hand, "I hain't mad at you, neither, and let's go fishin' tomorrow together!"

A Base-Board.

Mrs. Dobbs waited until dinner was over before she handed Mr. Dobbs the note Willie had brought from his teacher.

"My boy," said Dobbs, when he had read it. "I understand from this that you are excused from school until the board of education has an opportunity to consider your case?"

"Yes, sir," answered Willie, who had begun to whimper.

"Do you know what the board of education is, my son?"

"No sir."

Mr. Dobbs went into the shed and selected a thin, flexible strip of board. Then he summoned his son and for several minutes he was busy with Willie.

"That, my son," he said, as he finished, "is the board of education that was of use to me when I was a boy."—N. Y. Press.

Mixed Dates.

Four-year-old Sarah had two uncles (living out of town) who were about to be married.

"So you are going to your uncles' weddings, dear? And where will they be married?" asked an interested friend of the family.

"One is going to be married in Washington," declared the child, "and the other in January."—Lippincott's Magazine.

The Art of Letter Writing.

A man dictating a letter to another man with whom he had quarreled wrote thus: "Owing to the fact that my typist is a lady, I cannot say to you what I think of you; and as I am a gentleman, I would not. But you, being neither, can readily guess what is in my mind."—Novel Magazine.

AN INTERNATIONAL ZOO.

Different Countries Which Are Pictorially Represented by Animals.

Birds, beasts and even fish are used in various ways to pictorially represent particular nations and countries. Maybe fantastically treated, they figure, for instance, in cartoons; copied direct from nature, they appear on postage stamps, and so forth. In this way the lion, first here seen, represents Great Britain, being for this occasion supplied, we notice, with a man-o'-warsman's cap and a turn-down sailor collar, and portrayed as very much on guard on some rocky cliff of our island. We will notice some other creatures in this way which serve as emblems of countries.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Like the king of beasts, the king of birds finds a place in our gallery; indeed, he has two places. The American eagle, the emblem of the United States, is shown as having feathers growing in such a away as to form a stars and stripes pattern. He is a very fine bird, often depicted as in the act of soaring, has wings of huge extent, and plenty of talon and beak.

UNITED STATES.

The German eagle, we notice, is a somewhat different looking bird, with, in this instance, a distinctly martial appearance. He has a military helmet on his head, and wears a decoration of some kind hanging from a collar. The treatment of the bird's wings, tail and leg-feathers is quite Teutonic.

GERMANY.

The bear, big, shaggy and flat-footed, stands for Russia, having in that respect quite ousted the wolf, once sometimes so used. A wolf may, on occasion, look like a dog, or something like a large fox; but a bear is a bear always. The cap that the bear is wearing, from its shape, insists on the fact that this bear is a Russian one.

RUSSIA.

It may, by the way, be mentioned that the want of what we term a national animal to be taken as representative of Japan has been much felt by artists called upon in recent times to draw fancy pictures of affairs relating to the Japanese nation. France, next on our list, has the "Gallic fowl," a sprightly looking cockbird from the farmyard. He wears wooden sabots on his feet, has a Cap of Liberty set jauntily on his head, and has slung round his neck a medal bearing the initials of the French republic.

FRANCE.

Canada is here doubly represented by us. The picture shows the Canadian beaver holding between its teeth a maple-leaf, which as regards Canada is equivalent to the English rose, Scottish thistle, or Irish shamrock.

CANADA.

Of course, when it is said that, for instance, a lion represents Great Britain, a tiger India, and so forth, no law is laid down as to the attitude that the animal is to adopt. There are, therefore, any number of varieties of each of our examples; which, indeed, are offered as typical of pictorial treatment in each instance.

Newfoundland is sometimes represented by a dog of that breed; by a ptarmigan, a caribou, or American reindeer, or by a seal, but on account of the great fishing industry of Newfoundland, the natural history emblem more often chosen for that country is a codfish.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

Holland has the quaint bird, the stork—in the picture, rendered still more quaint by being depicted as wearing a Dutch cap, and smoking a long tobacco pipe.

HOLLAND.

Among more ponderous quadrupeds that are taken as emblems, the Republic of Liberia has the hippopotamus, just as we here perceive the Congo Free State has the elephant. The particular elephant selected by that state is, of course, a very large "tusker," which is usually depicted as being in a rather truculent mood.

CONGO FREE STATE.

Probably.

"Do you know the young woman whom you just spoke to very well?"

"Mere calling acquaintance."

"Oh! Telephone girl?"—Cleveland Leader.

THE MOCKING BIRD.

Very Graceful in Its Movements—How It Alights and Performs Other Maneuvers.

"The mocking bird's movements," says an observant writer, in the St. Louis Globe Democrat, "excepting in flight, are the perfection of grace; not even the cat bird can rival him in airy lightness, in easy elegance of motion.

"In alighting on a fence, he does not merely come down upon it; his manner is fairly poetical. He flies a little too high, drops like a feather, touches the perch lightly with his feet, balances and tosses upward his tail, often quickly running over the tips of half a dozen pickets before he rests. Passing across the yard, he turns not to avoid a taller tree or shrub, nor does he go through it; he simply bounds over, almost touching it, as if for pure sport.

"In the matter of bounds, the mocker is without a peer. The upward spring while singing is an ecstatic action, that must be seen to be appreciated; he rises into the air as though too happy to remain on earth, and, opening his wings, floats down, singing all the while.

"It is indescribable, but enchanting to see. In courtship, too, he makes effective use of this exquisite movement. In simple food-hunting on the ground—a most prosaic occupation truly—on approaching a hummock of grass, he bounds over it, instead of going around. In alighting on a tree, he does not pounce upon the twig he has selected, but upon a lower one, and passes quickly up through the branches, as lithe as a serpent.

"So fond is he of this exercise that one which I watched amused himself half an hour at a time in a pile of brush; starting from the ground, slipping easily through up to the top, standing there a moment, then flying back and repeating the performance.

"Should the goal of his journey be a fence picket, he alights on the beam which supports it, and hops gracefully to the top.

"Like the robin, the mocking-bird seeks his food from the earth, sometimes digging it, but often picking it up. His manner on the ground is much like the robin's; he lowers the head, runs a few steps rapidly, then erects himself very straight for a moment. But he adds to this familiar performance a peculiar and beautiful movement, the object of which I have been unable to discover.

"At the end of a run he lifts his wings, opening them wide, displaying their whole breadth, which makes him look like a gigantic butterfly, then instantly lowers his head and runs again, generally picking up something as he stops.

"A gentleman in South Carolina, familiar with the ways of the bird, suggests that his object is to startle the grasshopper, or, as he expresses it, to 'flush his game.'"

THE INK AQUARIUM.

Brilliant Sleight-of-Hand Performance Which Any Boy Can Learn to Do.

Present a glass full of ink to the view of the spectators, then prove that it is ink by dipping a visiting card in it and showing the card. Now announce that there are live fish in the tumbler that just thrive on ink, and you will prove they are there by changing the ink to water, so that the onlookers may see them. Throw a handkerchief over the glass so as to entirely envelop it, repeat an incantation and then suddenly whisk the handkerchief away. The audience will be very much astonished to find the glass filled with water, clear as crystal, with several fish swimming about in it.

APPEARANCE OF THE TWO GLASSES

The trick, explains Good Literature, is performed in this way: Get a piece of thin black rubber cloth and line the insides of the glass with it; then tie a black thread to the upper edge of the cloth. Attach a little button or bit of cork to the end of the thread overhanging the tumbler, as shown in the drawing. Fill the glass with clear water, and introduce several fish, live ones if you can possibly procure them, but if not, toy fish will serve, though the trick will hardly be so effective. The ink test with the visiting card is accomplished by means of a confederate who is in the audience and who hands you a card which is marked with ink on one side. As you dip the card into the tumbler you contrive to turn it around, and the audience then sees the black side, thinking naturally that it has just been immersed in the ink. The startling change from ink to water is effected by pulling out the rubber cloth by means of the attached thread and button when the handkerchief is whisked away. Some practice is needed first in order to do this without spilling the water in the glass.

A Boy Hero.

A boy of 13 went into the jail at Jacksonville, Fla., and asked the authorities to allow him to serve out the sentence of a boy who had been imprisoned for vagrancy. The justice who sentenced the boy was appealed to, and was so affected by the lad's devotion that he ordered his young friend's release.—Detroit Free Press.